

John Gollan:

BIOGRAPHY

JOHN GOLLAN was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on April 2nd 1911, of working class parents. He had to leave school when he was 13^{1/2} years old to become an apprentice painter, and worked at this trade in the following years. His parents were socialist in outlook, and this influenced his early entry into political activity. At the age of 15 he was selling papers produced by the Council of Action during the 1926 General Strike.

He joined the Communist Party in 1927. During this period he also joined the Young Communist League, and helped its growth in Scotland. As a result of his anti-militarist activities, he was arrested in 1931 and sent to prison for six months on a charge of sedition and incitement to mutiny, after conducting his own case in court.

In 1932 he became Editor of the Young Communist League's national paper, The Young Worker. He became General Secretary of the Young Communist League in 1935, and held this position until 1939.

During this period the Young Communist League played an outstanding part in bringing about united action of many of the youth organisations in Britain - political, religious, social and trade union - in the struggle against fascism and for peace, as well as for the economic and social demands of young workers, whose position and prospects were extremely bad in the years following the economic crisis of the early 1930s.

As a contribution to the development of this work, John Gollan wrote YOUTH IN BRITISH INDUSTRY, published in 1937, in which he made a detailed examination of the wages and conditions of young workers; the opportunities for education and training available, and put forward a "Charter of Youth Rights".

In 1939 John Gollan became District Secretary of the North East Coast District of the Communist Party, and in November 1941, Secretary of the Scottish Committee of the Party. He was elected to the National Executive Committee of the Party in 1941 and to the Political Committee.

John Gollan was mainly responsible for A PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR SCOTLAND (1944) published by the Scottish Committee of the Party. He also wrote a full length economic and social study of Scotland, SCOTTISH PROSPECT, as well as a number of pamphlets dealing with particular issues before the working class in Scotland.

In 1947 he came to London as Assistant General Secretary of the Party, working with Harry Pollitt, who was then General Secretary. Shortly afterwards he was appointed Assistant Editor of the Daily Worker. At the 22nd Congress of the Party in 1952 he introduced the second draft of the Party's programme, THE BRITISH ROAD TO SOCIALISM.

In 1954 John Gollan wrote THE BRITISH POLITICAL SYSTEM, in which he made a Marxist analysis of the machinery of the monopoly capitalist state in Britain; the functions of the political parties, and showed the way of advance for the British people through the Communist Party's programme.

In the same year he was made National Organiser of the Party.

In 1956 John Gollan became General Secretary of the Party, working with Harry Pollitt, who remained as Chairman of the Party until his death in 1960.